

TRIBUTE TO WENDELL L.
JOHNSON

• Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today I commend an outstanding Virginian, Mr. Wendell L. Johnson, whose work has adorned the walls of many members of the House of Representatives. The "Member of Congress" seal designed by Mr. Johnson has been used numerous times by our federal legislators over the years, and he deserves the acknowledgment of this chamber for his service to the United States.

As a young man of 18 years, Mr. Johnson enlisted in the Army to help his country during World War II. Rising to the rank of Sergeant, he earned a Good Conduct Medal before being honorably discharged in December 1945. Continuing a career of public service, Mr. Johnson joined the staff of United States Representative Alvin E. O'Konski of Wisconsin. While assisting the congressman in preparation for a televised speech in 1958, Mr. Johnson astutely realized that the viewing audience, who soon would be tuning in with this new medium, might not be able to identify Representative O'Konski at first sight. Understanding correctly the value of the congressman's image on television, Mr. Johnson hurried to the hardware store for the tools and supplies necessary to create a logo dignified enough to appear with a member of the United States Congress. By the time that the good people of Wisconsin had turned on their RCAs and Zeniths, Representative O'Konski spoke proudly from behind a podium bearing Johnson's exceptional "Member of Congress" seal.

While not the official seal of either the House of Representatives or the Senate, Mr. Johnson's noble design represented the first insignia and plaque used for an individual member of the United States Congress. In the decade following its first use, his handiwork became very popular among Representative O'Konski's colleagues in the House. Mr. Johnson was thrilled to see orders for his product from the House Stationery Clerk, and he made a hobby of providing plaques to a host of members, including Harold Ostertag, Louis Wyman, Bill Brock, Dan Rostenkowski, and Donald Rumsfeld.

Mr. Johnson's artistry expertly reflects the dignity and honor of the legislative branch. Featuring a proud eagle under a field of fourteen stars, the circular plaque bears the words "Member of Congress" above the name of our nation. A banner of "E Pluribus Unum" is clutched in the beak of the eagle, which holds in its talons a branch of olives and three arrows. Mr. Johnson's design has earned the esteem of many, as it has appeared on Congressional stationery, the official oil portrait of two committee chairmen, and even a number of gravestones.

I thank you for the opportunity today to give Mr. Wendell L. Johnson the recognition that he so rightly deserves for his service to Congress. •

PREMATURITY AWARENESS DAY

• Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise today to draw attention to a growing number of premature births in the United States. The March of Dimes has declared November 16th Prematurity Awareness Day. This event is part of a five-year plan, launched in 2003, to use the combined power of awareness, education, and research to significantly decrease the number of premature births in the United States.

The rise in premature births throughout the country and in my own State—despite all of our achievements in medicine—is astounding. Nationally, more than 480,000 babies were born preterm in 2002. Nearly 13 percent of Indiana's infants are born preterm and in half of the cases, doctors cannot identify the cause. Prematurity is the leading cause of infant death in the first month of life. Many of these infants will suffer lifelong health problems—such as cerebral palsy, mental retardation, chronic lung disease, and vision and hearing loss—and some will die. Reducing the number of premature births will improve the health of hundreds of thousands of infants born each year.

Aside from these human costs, the financial cost of caring for preterm infants is enormous. The March of Dimes estimates that the national hospital bill for infants with a diagnosis of prematurity/low birthweight was \$13.6 billion in 2001.

I am pleased to be a cosponsor of S. 1726, the PREEMIE Act, legislation that seeks to expand and coordinate research on the prevention of preterm birth and the most effective care for babies when they are born preterm.

Senator LINCOLN and I have also introduced S. 1734, the Prevent Prematurity and Improve Child Health Act, which seeks to improve Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program to better reflect our current state of knowledge on preterm birth. For example, medical research tells us that smoking is a considerable risk factor for preterm and low birthweight infants. Our bill takes this knowledge and translates it into practice by ensuring that smoking cessation services and pharmaceuticals are available for pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid.

My wife Char and I have been longtime volunteers for the March of Dimes and I am pleased that they are committing such an enormous amount of time, energy and resources into conquering the stubborn problem of preterm birth with their five-year Prematurity Campaign. Both of these bills have the potential to make a real difference in many lives and I hope that our colleagues will consider joining us in this effort.

I am proud to tell you that the Indiana March of Dimes Chapter has many events planned for Prematurity Awareness Day. I commend the March of Dimes for its dedication in working toward a day when babies and their fami-

lies no longer have to face the devastating consequences of premature birth. I call on my colleagues to join the fight against premature birth. •

• Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise today to draw attention to a serious issue—the growing number of premature births in the United States. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, 480,000 babies were born prematurely—that is, born at less than 37 completed weeks of gestation—in 2002. The number of premature births in the United States increased 27 percent between 1982 and 2002.

In my own State of Idaho ten percent of babies born in 2002 were preterm, and the rate of preterm births in Idaho has risen 21 percent since 1992. The preterm rate for our Native American population was 12.8 percent and 11 percent in our Hispanic community. In addition, 6.1 percent of all babies born in Idaho had a low birth weight. It is even higher for Hispanic babies—6.9 percent of them are born with low birth weight, higher than the national average.

The March of Dimes has begun to address the issue of prematurity and health disparities by funding prenatal education and outreach projects in different parts of Idaho. Two projects are in our largest cities, Boise and Nampa, and target low-income and low-income Hispanic women and one outreach project is on a rural reservation. Finally, the March of Dimes is funding a smoking cessation project for pregnant women in one of our northern cities, Lewiston.

The March of Dimes has declared November 16th Prematurity Awareness Day. This event is part of a 5-year plan, launched in 2003, to use the combined power of awareness, education, and research to significantly decrease the number of premature births in the United States. In Idaho this week there will be media coverage spotlighting prematurity awareness, and pink and blue street lights in downtown Boise for 2 weeks drawing public attention to the issue. In addition, many retailers will be providing free information to shoppers about the early warning signs of prematurity.

Let me share the story of this year's Idaho ambassador family. During a routine medical exam, the mother of twins Morgan and Max was placed on immediate bed rest due to signs of preterm labor. Fortunately, when Morgan and Max were born 10 weeks early, they received specialized medical care at the neonatal intensive care unit and were able to come home after just five weeks. Today they are healthy, vibrant toddlers.

Thanks to research being supported by the March of Dimes, doctors are better able to identify signs of preterm labor—a life-saving factor in the case of Morgan and Max. Advances made by the March of Dimes in the treatment of premature babies—like surfactant therapy—gave these twins a good start toward a healthy life.

The March of Dimes has long been a national leader in the fight for infant